

Informative/ Explanatory Writing Within Content Areas

Informative/Explanatory writing requires students to examine and convey complex ideas, concepts, and information clearly and accurately. The purpose of this type of writing is to demonstrate comprehension of a topic, concept, process, or procedure. Students write in response to a source, which may be a text or other media such as art, music, charts, or graphs. An effective response requires students to read the “text” closely, in order to demonstrate an understanding of the topic and locate evidence from the “text” to support their response.

How Argument and Informative/Explanatory Writing Differ

Argument Writing	Explanatory Writing
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Seeks to make people believe that something is true or to <i>persuade</i> people to change their beliefs or behavior.• Provides information about causes, contexts, and consequences of processes, phenomena, states of affairs, objects, and terminology, <u>and</u> presents a case with the solid evidence, while acknowledging counterarguments on a debatable issue.• Supports the writer’s claim(s) with sound reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Attempts to make the reader <i>understand</i> rather than to persuade him or her to accept a certain point of view• Provides information about causes, contexts, and consequences of processes, phenomena, states of affairs, objects, and terminology.• Supports the writer’s thesis with evidence and supporting detail.

The Connection to Close Reading

In order to write about a “text,” students must be able to understand a variety of texts and media formats. Close reading helps students make meaning of scientific, historical, or technical texts and art forms so they can identify the evidence that they need to write an effective informative/explanatory essay.

Related Vocabulary

Analyze: to examine, closely study, and evaluate a text by breaking down and examining its elements and components.

Concrete details: the specific facts, examples, and data that provide evidence for an informative/explanatory essay.

Formal style: writing that is free of slang, trite expressions, abbreviations, symbols, email shortcut language, contractions, and the use of the personal pronoun “I.” The writer does not speaking directly to the reader by using the word *you*.

Organizational structures

- **Cause/ Effect** shows why something happened, why certain conditions exist, or what resulted from an action or condition; shows the influence of one event upon another; uses logic and evidence to show the relationship between an event and its cause or an event and its outcome.
- **Classification** organizes ideas/concept/ terms into useful categories; provides related examples and explains how they fit into each category.
- **Compare/contrast** explores the similarities and differences between two or more subjects; addresses similarities and/or differences between/among topics; organized either to analyze or inform.
- **Definition** provides more than a dictionary definition; shows what something *is*.
- **Process** explains how something works; provides sequential directions for how something is done.

Thesis statement addresses the writer’s intent; is based on the writer’s purpose; appears as the last sentence in the essay’s opening paragraph.

The length of a written response is determined by the task and its purpose. Every written response is not intended to be an essay.

Informative/ Explanatory Writing ***Within Content Areas***

Art: Write to Source- Self-portraiture

- Explain the choices you made as you developed ideas for your portrait. Consider the master artist examples viewed, the pose, the props, the lighting, and your choice of composition, color, and placement.

Career Technology Education: Write to Source- Technical Specifications Manual

- Diagram the sequence of steps required to diagnose and troubleshoot malfunctioning equipment.

Career Technology Education: Write to Source- Journal Article

- Explain the conflicts that arose regarding the acceptance and use of HeLa cells in research.
- Compare and contrast health benefits and risks of Paleolithic vs. vegan diets.

English/Language Arts: Write to Source- Short Story

- Explain how Sandra Cisneros's choice of words develops the point of view of the young speaker in her story "Eleven." [RL.6.6]*

English/Language Arts: Write to Source- Diverse Media and Formats

- Analyze how the Japanese filmmaker Akira Kurosawa in his film *Throne of Blood* draws on and transforms Shakespeare's play *Macbeth* in order to develop a similar plot set in feudal Japan. [RL.9–10.9]*

Gifted and Talented: Write to Source-Primary Research Data

- Evaluate the usefulness of your original primary research data for supporting your hypothesis.

Health Education: Write to Source-Diverse Media and Formats

- After viewing the video, *The Cat Who Drank Too Much*, trace and explain the stages of alcoholism as they relate to the cat's behavior.
- Compare and contrast two of the Decision Making Models that have been used in class.
- Explain one of the Decision Making Models and its strengths in facilitating a healthy decision.
- Explain how to determine the validity of a source of health information, products, or services.

Mathematics: Write to Source- Multiple Representations

- Examine and explain the connections among the verbal model, graph, and equation of a quadratic

function.

Music: Write to Source- Marine Band Performance and School Band Performance

- After listening to recordings of two performances, identify strengths of each performance and give suggestions for improvement in our performance, considering tone, intonation, balance, and articulation.

Science: Write to Source- Diverse Media and Formats (video clip, laboratory data, selected readings)

- Trace the transformation of a rock through the rock cycle from sedimentary to metamorphic to igneous back to sedimentary. Be sure to explain the processes that affect each transformation.
- Using the data that you collected from the Photosynthesis by Chloroplast lab, explain the process of photosynthesis and how photosynthetic activity varies in different lighting conditions.

Social Studies: Write to Source-Diverse Media and Formats (maps, articles, first-person accounts)

- Explain how human actions contributed to the desertification of the Sahel region.

Social Studies: Write to Source- Primary Sources

- After reading primary source perspectives about slavery, compare Northern and Southern rationales for the ending or continuation of slavery. Use details from the documents to support your answer.
- Analyze the role of African American soldiers in the Civil War by comparing and contrasting primary source materials against *secondary* syntheses such as Jim Haskins's *Black, Blue and Gray: African Americans in the Civil War*. [RH.9–10.9]*

Write to Source- Primary Sources

- Spanish II: Interview two adults about their childhood experiences and, in Spanish, compare them to experiences of children today.

World Languages: Write to Source- Diverse Media and Formats (newspaper clippings, movie posters, video clips)

- Italian IV: In Italian, define *omertà* by comparing the actions of Salvatore Giuliano, Jesse James, and Robin Hood and examining how each provides justice for the people.

*From *Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts and Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects Appendix B: Text Exemplars and Sample Performance*
Howard County Public Schools, 2012